

Newsletter for English Teachers

January 2007

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Americans Celebrate Achievements of Martin Luther King Jr. on January 15, 2007

Americans on each third Monday of January honor the life and achievements of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., (1929–1968), the 1964 Nobel Peace laureate and the individual most associated with the triumphs of the African-American civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. As political organizer, supremely skilled orator and advocate of nonviolent protest, King was pivotal in persuading his fellow Americans to end the legal segregation that prevailed throughout the South and parts of other regions, and in sparking support for the civil rights legislation that established the legal framework for racial equality in the United States.

King was among those champions of justice whose influence transcended national boundaries. A student of the philosophy and principles of nonviolence enunciated by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948), King in 1959 traveled to India, where he studied further the legacy of the man his widow, Coretta Scott King, later would call his “political mentor.” Nelson Mandela, accepting the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, similarly credited King as his predecessor in the effort to resolve justly the issues of racism and human dignity.

Son of the prominent Atlanta pastor Martin Luther King Sr., King at the age of 26 completed a doctorate in theology at Boston University. In 1954, while completing his dissertation, King accepted the pastorate at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. It was in Montgomery the following year that [Rosa Parks](#), an African-American seamstress, was jailed for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated municipal bus to a white passenger. The incident sparked the [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#), in which the city's African-Americans refused to patronize its segregated bus system. King led the organization directing the boycott and became the movement's public face, appealing to white Americans' spirit of brotherhood. When the federal courts, following the reasoning of the Supreme Court's [Brown v. Board of Education](#) decision, declared the bus segregation law unconstitutional, King emerged as a national figure.

During the early 1960s, King and the Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) initiated a number of peaceful protests against segregated institutions. Southern. (The SCLC was an alliance of black ministers and churches organized to pursue nonviolent direct action against segregation.) In May 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, Police Commissioner Eugene “Bull” Connor unleashed police dogs



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledges the crowd during his “I Have a Dream” speech (© AP Images)

★ **“I Have A Dream” Speech – Audio and Transcript**

<http://www.hpol.org/record.php?id=72>

★ **Ich habe einen Traum**

(German translation of the speech)

http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/speeches/pub/address_german.pdf

**Holiday of the Month:
January 15, 2007**

Martin Luther King Day

<http://usa.usembassy.de/holidays-mlking.htm>

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and high-pressure fire hoses against peaceful demonstrators, many of them schoolchildren. The images horrified the nation. King was arrested during these demonstrations and from his jail cell produced the [Letter From a Birmingham Jail](#), in which he argued that one who breaks an unjust law to arouse the consciousness of his community "is in reality expressing the highest respect for law," provided he acts "openly, lovingly and with a willingness to accept the penalty." That August, African-American leaders organized the [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#). Here, before an estimated quarter million civil rights supporters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, King offered one of the most powerful orations in American history. Generations of schoolchildren have learned by heart lines from the I Have a Dream speech, in which King prayed for the day when people would "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

The images from Birmingham and Washington helped crystallize support for the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. In 1965, the violent Selma, Alabama, police response to a voting rights march sparked a similar surge in support for King, the civil rights movement and for legislation guaranteeing the right of political participation. Consequently, the [Voting Rights Act](#) became law on August 6, 1965.

With the passage of these civil rights laws, King continued to employ his strategy of nonviolent social protest even as some younger leaders at times argued for more radical means. King also broadened his agenda to encompass efforts to focus attention on African-American poverty. King was in Memphis, Tennessee, in support of striking black garbage workers when, on April 4, 1968, an assassin's bullet cut him down at the age of 39.

Americans honor the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. with a national holiday celebrated on the third Monday of each January, and by a national monument in direct sight of the Lincoln Memorial, where King inspired Americans with his dreams of racial justice and equality. Countless individuals and organizations, including [The King Center](#), in Atlanta, carry on his work.

★ **About the USA > Holidays > Martin Luther King Day**

<http://usa.usembassy.de/holidays-mlking.htm>

★ **About the USA > Society > African Americans**

<http://usa.usembassy.de/society-blacks.htm>

★ **Photo Gallery – The March on Washington**

<http://usinfo.state.gov/photogallery/index.php?album=/mowa1&>

★ **The Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King**

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/civilrts/>



President Bush greets the daughters of Martin Luther King Jr., Yolanda Denise King and Bernice Albertine King at the Inauguration of the memorial. (© AP Images)

Inauguration of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial, Washington D.C.

Opera and gospel music stars sang, President Bush and former President Clinton and four children gave speeches, poets read their lines and 75 people put shovels into the ground to inaugurate a memorial to civil rights hero Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington's front yard -- the National Mall -- on November 13.

President Bush said he was proud to dedicate the memorial in its "rightful place" -- between monuments to Thomas Jefferson, who "declared the promise of America," and Abraham Lincoln, "who defended the promise of America." King, Bush said, "redeemed the promise of America."

Read more at:

[Presidents, Celebrities Inaugurate Martin Luther King Memorial, USInfo, November 13, 2006](#)

Official website for the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial that will be located on a "four-acre plot on the north east corner of the Tidal Basin within the precinct of the Jefferson Memorial and north of the memorial to President Roosevelt" in Washington, D.C. It features maps, a description of landscape elements, news, brief background about Dr. King, and photos from the commemorative groundbreaking held on November 13, 2006. <http://www.mlkmemorial.org>

"SAY IT LOUD, I'M BLACK AND I'M PROUD" JAMES BROWN, THE GODFATHER OF SOUL (1933 – 2006)

On December 25, 2006, the legendary Godfather of Soul, James Brown, passed away. He was one of the most influential American artists of 20th century popular music, leaving his mark on a wide range of musical styles from blues, gospel and soul to hip hop. With 17 chart number ones – a feat topped only by Stevie Wonder and Louis Jordan - over 800 titles in his repertoire and a grueling touring schedule up to his death and he was rightly called the 'hardest working man in show business'. <http://www.godfatherofsoul.com/>



Singers James Brown and Aretha Franklin perform at the Taboo night club in Detroit, January 11, 1987. (© AP Images)

★ **"American Original" James Brown Inspired Many,** [USInfo, December 27, 2006](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Gerald_Ford_A_Tribute.html)

★ **About the USA > Arts > Music**

<http://usa.usembassy.de/arts-music.htm>

★ **Brown's final concert in Washington at the 9:30 Club on December 28, 2005, with Chuck Brown**

opening the show, can be heard courtesy of National Public Radio's All Songs Considered. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5070028&ft=1&f=4627437>

President Ford, 1913 - 2006



Gerald R. Ford,
Thirty-Eighth President
1974-1977

Gerald R. Ford, the improbable 38th president of the United States, and the man charged with upholding the nation's democratic traditions and soothing its sharp partisan divides in the aftermath of Richard M. Nixon's resignation from the presidency, died December 26, 2006 at the age of 93. The only individual elevated to the U.S. presidency without having been elected either to that office or the vice presidency, Ford served during a tumultuous period of increasing partisan and ideological divides, when Congress challenged many presidential prerogatives and attempted to assert greater control of the direction and substance of U.S. foreign policy.

Much of Gerald R. Ford's enduring appeal likely lies in Americans' collective judgment that he was an honest, intelligent, approachable man, neither charismatic nor scholarly, but nonetheless reliable and trustworthy. Called to service at a time of crisis, Ford remained plain-spoken and somewhat self-deprecating. He regularly depicted himself as doing no more than any American would, merely stepping up to assume a responsibility that had been placed on his shoulders. "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln," he memorably said, likening himself to the more modest automobile.

Read more at

★ **Gerald Ford: A Tribute**

http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Gerald_Ford_A_Tribute.html

★ **Biography of Gerald R. Ford**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/gf38.html>

★ **Key Speeches**

http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Gerald_Ford_A_Tribute/ford_speeches.html

★ **Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum**

<http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/default.asp>

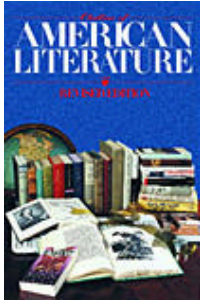
★ **CNN Special Report: Gerald Ford**

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2006/obit.ford/>

★ **Photo Gallery: Gerald R. Ford, 1913-2006**

http://photos.state.gov/galleries/usinfo-photo/39/Gerald_Ford/

LITERATURE



Outline of American Literature (New Edition December 2006)

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/oal/oaltoc.htm>

The Outline of American literature, newly revised, traces the paths of American narrative, fiction, poetry and drama as they move from pre-colonial times into the present, through such literary movements as romanticism, realism and experimentation.

Read more at: <http://usa.usembassy.de/arts-literature.htm>

The Oxford Book of American Essays

<http://www.bartleby.com/109/>

Many a literary theorist and critic have wondered: "What is American literature?" Others have gone so far as to wonder whether such a thing can be defined and this area of academic inquiry has delighted many for several centuries. Late in the 19th century, one Brander Matthews was called upon to do just that-create an edited volume for the Oxford Press that would represent a variety of essays from different Americans of the time. All told, this volume published in 1914 contained 32 essays, including "John Bull" by Washington Irving, "Buds and Bird-Voices" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and "Dante by the Bowery" by Theodore Roosevelt. Other selections include inquisitive essays by Edgar Allen Poe, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Walt Whitman.

Poetry Tool

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/tool.poem.html>

This useful resource from the Poetry Foundation allows you to browse first by poets, poems, audiovisuals, articles, and children's, then by further appropriate subdivisions; under Children's, for instance, you can browse "Poems to Read," "Poems by Age," "Poems by Category," and "Articles." You can also look for reading guides, live readings, book picks, excerpts from Poetry Magazine, and more.



2007 STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES

United States Census Bureau. Released December 2006

<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>

The Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2007, published by the U.S. Census Bureau since 1878, is the standard summary of statistics on the social, political, and economic organization of the United States. This annual compendium of data is the single most useful statistical source for data on the United States. The Table of Contents page allows one to browse the publication section-by-section, including the sections on basic population data, income, trade, energy, arts and elections. The page cited above allows one to search the 2007 edition as well as past editions.

Interesting projections:

- Adults and teens will spend nearly five months (3,518 hours) next year watching television, surfing the Internet, reading daily newspapers and listening to personal music devices. According to projections from a communications industry forecast (Table 1110), people will spend 65 days in front of the TV, 41 days listening to radio and a little over a week on the Internet in 2007. Adults will spend about a week reading a daily newspaper and teens and adults will spend another week listening to recorded music. Consumer spending for media is forecasted to be \$936.75 per person.
- U.S. consumers are projected to spend \$55.5 billion to purchase 3.17 billion books in 2007.

2006 WORD OF THE YEAR: "CARBON NEUTRAL"

On November 13, the editors of *The New Oxford American Dictionary* unveiled the 2006 WORD OF THE YEAR: "**carbon neutral**."

Being carbon neutral involves calculating your total climate-damaging carbon emissions, reducing them where possible, and then balancing your remaining emissions, often by purchasing a carbon offset: paying to plant new trees or investing in "green" technologies such as solar and wind power. Source: http://blog.oup.com/oupbbg/2006/11/what_do_al_gore.html

Runners-up for the 2006 Word of the Year include:

- **CSA** (community-supported agriculture: a system of food distribution where individual consumers purchase a season's worth of regularly delivered allotments of the vegetables, fruit, dairy, or other agricultural products grown on a small, usually family-owned farm or orchard.)
- **DRM** (digital rights management: hardware or software that controls access and use of digital data, access and uses that may be disapproved of by rights owners, but that are not necessarily illegal.)
- **dwarf planet** (a new designation for planetlike objects [such as Pluto] that are round and orbit the sun, but have not cleared other objects from their orbits. The word pluton was also proposed as a term for planetlike objects beyond Neptune, with Pluto as their prototype.)
- **elbow bump** (a greeting in which two people touch elbows, recommended by the World Health Organization as an alternative to the handshake in order to reduce the spread of germs.)
- **fishapod** (a humorous name for a newly discovered fossil [Tiktaalik roseae] that has features of both fish and land mammals and as such is considered an evolutionary link between the two.)
- **funner** (an informal/nonstandard comparative of fun.)
- **ghostriding** (the practice of exiting a moving vehicle and dancing either beside it, or on the hood or roof, while the vehicle is in motion.)
- **Islamofascism** (a controversial term equating some modern Islamic movements with the European fascist movements of the early twentieth century.)

Read more:

★ Carbon Neutral shopping guide (Boston Globe)

http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2006/12/17/carbon_neutrality_a_shoppers_guide/

★ A Consumer's Guide to Becoming Carbon Neutral (Yahoo News)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/usnews/20061208/ts_usnews/aconsumersguidetobecomingcarbonneutral

★ Wikipedia Encyclopedia - Carbon offset: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_offset

For more information on environmental policies or other current issues and trends in the United States, please check the InfoAlert at <http://infoalert.usembassy.de> Many articles are available "full text", some articles maybe password-protected. To register for a password, please contact us at infoalert.de@state.gov

ARTICLES & WEB SITE SUGGESTIONS

The Cato Education Market Index

Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 585, December 13, 2006

http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6848

The index presented in this report attempts to measure how closely existing school systems resemble free markets and rates education policy proposals on how conducive they are to the rise of competitive marketplaces. We define an education market as a system that provides the freedom for producers and consumers to voluntarily associate with one another, as well as the incentives that encourage families to be diligent consumers and educators to innovate, control costs, and expand their services. It is a system in which schools can offer instruction in any subject, using any method,

for which families are willing to pay. One of the least surprising findings of the Cato Education Market Index is that no U.S. state currently has anything resembling a free education marketplace. Perhaps more surprising, few of the prevailing "school choice" reforms, which are often described as "market-based," "market-inspired," or even "free-market" proposals, actually embody true markets.

Teachers Speak Out On Expectations and Experiences

Trends & Tudes, November 2006

http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters/k12news/HI_Trends&TudesNews2006_v5_iss01.pdf [6p]

Recent Harris Polls have found that teaching is among the professions with the greatest prestige and that 83% of Americans trust teachers to tell the truth. In this issue of *Trends & Tudes*, we turn to teachers to take the pulse of American schools and the teaching profession, and to help understand how the needs of America's students are (or are not) being met. These findings are based on the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 2006, Expectations and Experiences*. Full survey:

<http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/81821402701160505871V1F2006MetLifeTeacherSurvey.pdf> [167p]

The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Elementary and Secondary Education

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Briefing Report, November 2006

<http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/112806diversity.pdf> [117p]

"The bottom line, I believe, is this: The existing elementary and secondary research, coupled with: [1] corresponding research in sectors directly connected with the mission of elementary and secondary education, [2] evidence regarding the important judgments that local boards of education are making each year throughout our country, and [3] federal policies that specifically affirm and support those judgments, provides a compelling basis upon which to resolve that the issue of the educational benefits of diversity in elementary and secondary education is beyond debate."

The 2006 Brown Center Report on American Education: How Well Are Our Students Learning? *The Brookings Institution, Brown Center on Education Policy, October 18, 2006*

http://www.brookings.edu/gs/brown/bc_report/2006/2006report.pdf [34p]

"The 2006 Brown Center Report on American Education evaluates the role that student happiness and confidence play in achievement, and examines whether states are artificially inflating the number of students meeting proficiency standards mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001."

Students on the Move: The Future of International Students in the United States

American Council on Education (ACE), October 2006

<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=InfoCenter&CONTENTID=18573&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm> [16p]

"Trends in international student enrollment reveal a shifting market that could dramatically impact the United States' position as the destination of choice for the largest group of international students, a new issue brief released today by the American Council on Education (ACE) finds." This paper examines the current situation and recent trends in international student enrollment in the United States, compares these trends with those in other countries, and looks at the efforts of other countries and regional groups to attract international students.

InfoAlert - For More on Trends and Current Events in the United States

infoalert.usembassy.de

InfoAlert highlights recent articles and reports from leading U.S. journals and provides informed commentary on international and domestic issues.

Interesting Web Sites

Heritage Teaching Resources - Smithsonian Education

http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/heritage_resources.html

Teaching resources from all the Smithsonian collections to support the various heritage months (Black History, Women's History, Hispanic Heritage, Asian Pacific Americans, and American Indian Heritage). The Resource Library is searchable by type of material, grade level, topic, and media.

Being an American

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13441693/>

Numerous print and video features from MSNBC explore what being an American is all about. Among them: a slide show on "the most American place," an interactive history of American immigration, and a chance to see how well you might do on the citizenship test.

Lyrical Legacy: 400 Years of American Song and Poetry

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/lyrical/>

"Lyrical Legacy helps teachers explore eighteen American songs and poems from the digital collections of the Library of Congress. Each song and poem is represented by an original primary source document, along with historical background information and, in many cases, sound recordings and alternate versions." Songs are listed by time period (early America through 1968), and include titles such as "Yankee Doodle" and "You're a Grand Old Flag."

Eigen's Political and Historical Quotations

<http://www.politicalquotes.org/>

"The world's largest collection of memorable quotes about and by historians, politicians and other public figures," searchable by keyword, author or idea. When you select a quote, you get the full source citation, the clickable key concepts it's filed under, and related quotes, if any.

Upcoming Webchats

Webchats allow you and your students to interact with U.S. government and private sector subject experts, academics, journalists, and everyday citizens American citizens on a wide range of topics using a chat tool over the Internet.

A webchat typically lasts for one hour. The version of chat that we use is based on an HTML webpage format. The bandwidth required to participate is minimal. There is no software to be downloaded on to your computer. Registration is, however, required.

January 8, 2007, 15:00 – 16:00

February 12, 2007, 15:00 – 16:00

Webchat: Studying and Working in the U.S.

Questions relating to studying, working or seeking internships in the U.S. will be answered by experts from the Public Affairs/Information Resource Center and Consular sections.

Please register in advance at: <http://germany.usembassy.de/chat/>

February 1, 2007

Webchat: Native Deen: Celebrating Islam and Promoting Tolerance Through Hip-Hop

Founded in 2000, the American hip-hop group Native Deen has become known for its positive energy, traditional percussions, and lyrics focused on the topics of tolerance and the teachings of Islam. The group is composed of Muslim-American hip-hop artists Joshua Salaamis, Abdul-Malik Ahmad and Naeem Muhammad, who together have performed throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. In the fall of 2006, Native Deen traveled to Turkey, Dubai, the Palestinian Territories and Israel on behalf of the U.S. Department of State.

Please register at:

http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/native_deen_01_feb_2007.html

Please refer to your IRC for copies of these articles.

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